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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 DUSHANBE 000124

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN (HUSHEK)
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JUSTICE FOR (DUCOT AND NEWCOMBE)
DEFENSE FOR OSD/P

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN: DECEMBER 2008 LAW ENFORCEMENT DEVELOPMENTS

11. SUMMARY: Tajik law-enforcement authorities continued seizing significant amounts of narcotics in 2008, over six tons and drafted an interdiction and demand reduction plan through 2012. Border skirmishes continued unabated as Tajik border guards intercept armed traffickers from Afghanistan. Drug traffickers are kidnapping border area Tajiks for ransom until their families pay ransom money to clear debts for drug deals. A regional Tajik court sentenced two Afghan nationals to 24 years for drug trafficking and illegal border crossing. The Drug Control Agency burned the largest quantity of drugs in its history, more than two tons. Afghan security services handed over to Tajik authorities the reported head of the outlawed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan/Turkestan (IMU/IMT). Border guards and other law enforcement officers continue to seize notable amounts of weapons including machine guns and grenade launchers. Not to be overlooked, Customs officer in the north of Tajikistan seized a large shipment of smuggled fireworks. The Tajik Government is developing a new AML law but very slowly, preferring to extend a property registration amnesty law for another six months. The Tajik Government submitted a draft law on freedom of conscience and religious associations to parliament for its consideration. The Tajik Anti-Corruption Agency said that corruption cost Tajikistan some 89.6 million Somoni (\$24 million) in 2008. OSCE conducted a five-day training course on the rights of trafficked persons and effective investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases. End summary.

DRUGS SEIZURES 2008 SUMMARY

12. In 2008, 3.4 of the six tons of narcotics seized were opiates including 1.6 tons of heroin and 1.7 tons of raw opium. Police seized 2.7 tons, the counter narcotics agency seized 1.3 tons, border guards seized 1.1 tons, security officers seized 841 kilograms, and customs officers intercepted 91 kilograms. Since its founding nine years ago, the Drug Control Agency seized sixty tons of drugs in Tajikistan, including more than twenty-eight tons of heroin. This amount of heroin could supply 30 million addicts if had not been intercepted, however, of the 1.3 tons of narcotics the DCA seized in 2008 only 368 kilograms was heroin, their lowest total in the last three years.

13. The Tajik government is taking measures to stop drug transit. The government recently designed a targeted comprehensive national program to prevent drug addiction and counter drug trafficking in Tajikistan for the 2008-12 period.

BORDER GUARDS' 2008 RESULTS

14. On January 7, Colonel-General Khayriddin Abdurahimov head of the State Committee of National Security, the parent organization of the Border Guards, reviewed the results of 2008 and laid plans for 2009.

Border Guards officers reported to him that during the last year border guards and armed drug smugglers were involved in seventeen skirmishes on the Tajik-Afghan border. Border Guards killed ten drug smugglers and wounded two others. Overall, Border Guards detained twenty-one drug couriers in 2008. Last year Border Guards seized 916 kilograms of narcotics. The total included 110 kilograms of heroin, 752 kilograms of cannabis and 53 kilograms of raw opium.

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RECENT BORDER OPERATIONS

15. On December 29 Tajik Border Guards arrested two Afghan drug dealers, Khairullo valadi Sulaymon and Sufinazar valadi Imomnazar, in Khatlon's Shurabad district who were taking Tajiks from border villages and holding them hostage until their families paid ransom money to clear debts for drug deals. Border guards carried out a special operation in the border village of Porvor in Shurabad. They confiscated more than 100 kilograms of drugs and two Kalashnikov sub-machine-guns. Reporting on the border operations the Border Guard spokesman said that Shurabad is the most vulnerable part of Tajikistan's common border with Afghanistan. (Note: Using UNODC as an implementing agent, INL has rebuilt three border observation posts in the Shurabad area and has several additional projects underway. End note.)

AFGHANS LOCKED AWAY FOR 24 YEARS

16. A regional court sentence two Afghan nationals to 24- year jail terms for drug trafficking at a sentencing hearing on December 16. The Khatlon regional court sentenced Sultonmahmad valadi Gulokhon and Rafiq valadi Shervali to in a high-security penal colony. According to Ismatullo Rasulov, an official with the Khatlon

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regional prosecutor's office, the sentence followed their conviction on charges of involvement in drug trafficking and illegally crossing the border. Border Guards detained them in the Khatlon province on September 17 carrying 14.8 kilograms of hashish.

DRUG CONTROL AGENCY BURNS TWO TONS OF NARCOTICS

17. On December 26 the Drug Control Agency burned more than two tons of narcotics in the furnace at Tajiktekstilnash plant in Dushanbe. It was the largest drug burning in the history of the Agency. The total included more than one ton of raw opium, 390 kilograms of heroin and more than 622 kilograms of cannabis. Officers from the counter narcotics agency confiscated the drugs in the course of 2007-2008. The narcotics were material evidence in 148 drug-related criminal cases. According to the Agency, they have burned more than ten tons of drugs, including more than four tons of heroin since 2003, when the U.S. funded the UNODC project to establish the counternarcotics agency began.

CRIME/TERRORISM

18. On December 27, Afghan security services handed over to the Tajik government Anvarjon Qayumov, the reported head of the outlawed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan/Turkestan (IMU/IMT) who had fled from the Isfara in northern Tajikistan. Afghan authorities detained the 41-year old Qayumov at the request of Tajik authorities who is reported to have attempted to kill police officers and is suspected in a number of other serious crimes. Last November security services of Tajikistan and Afghanistan initiated discussions on a mutual extradition agreement and the State Committee for National Security provided to the Afghan security service a list of wanted Tajik nationals. On December 24 Tajikistan and Afghanistan concluded the agreement for the transfer of prisoners which resulted in the handover of Qayumov to Tajik law enforcement authorities.

WEAPONS: BOTTLE ROCKETS AND GRENADE LAUNCHERS

19. On December 29 law enforcement authorities confiscated 18 Kalashnikov machine-guns, ten pistols, six grenade launchers, 18 hand grenades, 17 hunting guns, and 2,000 bullets of different calibers in the Kulob district of Khatlon province.

¶10. Sugd customs officers in northern Tajikistan seized nearly 37,000 pyrotechnics at the Khudjand Customs checkpoint. Customs officers inspected a vehicle that came from Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic and found 35,600 firecrackers, 930 "salutes" and 332 other items among a shipment of fabric. The preliminary investigation established that the fireworks belong to an entrepreneur from the Bobojon Gafurov district, Ms. Dilbar Ismoilova.

¶11. Border guards jointly with officers from other law enforcement and security agencies carried out 79 special operations in 2008 that led to the seizure of 36 firearms, including 14 Kalashnikov sub-machine guns, 13 grenade launchers, six carbines, two pistols, one machine gun, and 717 bullets of different calibers.

LEGISLATION: AML LAW DELAYED; LAW ON RELIGION PASSED

¶12. The Tajik Government is developing a new AML law but slowly. The current version of the AML law was drafted in 2007. Reportedly, the government will adopt the law after the end of the extended period of legalization of property. President Rahmon reported advocated extending the popularly titled amnesty law. Officially Qadvocated extending the popularly titled amnesty law. Officially Parliament postponed the deadline from December 31, 2008 to June of 2009 at the request of the people.

¶13. The Tajik Government submitted a draft law on freedom of conscience and religious associations to parliament for its consideration. It is anticipated that the religion law will be passed in the first half of 2009. The draft law is viewed by many as a continued attempt to control the increasing power of religion in Tajik society. Authorities view the power of religious groups as a threat to the government, which is unable to solve socio-economic issues in the country.

CORRUPTION

¶14. Anticorruption agency director, Sherkhon Salimzoda, announced that corruption was widespread in government agencies and ministries in Tajikistan at a roundtable meeting entitled "Specialized Anticorruption Institutions: Experience of Europe and Central Asia"

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in Dushanbe on December 12. As evidence, Salimzoda pointed to a case where an investigator with the Prosecutor-General's Office was caught red-handed while taking a bribe.

¶15. The Tajik anti-corruption agency released a report that corruption cost Tajikistan some 89.6 million Somoni (\$24 million). The Agency said it has taken disciplinary action against 1,145 officials and sacked 58 officials for corruption. Not surprisingly, Tajikistan ranked 150th out of 180 countries surveyed in Transparency International's latest annual corruption perceptions index (CPI).

TRAFFICKING

¶16. OSCE conducted a five-day training course on the rights of trafficked persons and effective investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases on December 18. The Dushanbe OSCE Office said that the course brought together senior police officers, prosecutors, and judges from Tajik law enforcement agencies that are responsible for investigation of human trafficking crimes. Lithuanian experts led the training course and comprised presentations, interactive group discussions and a case simulation, followed by a debriefing. Note: INL coordinates U.S. anti-trafficking programs with the OSCE and intends to conduct additional courses for law enforcement teachers at the MVD Academy using the same trainer. End note.

QUAST